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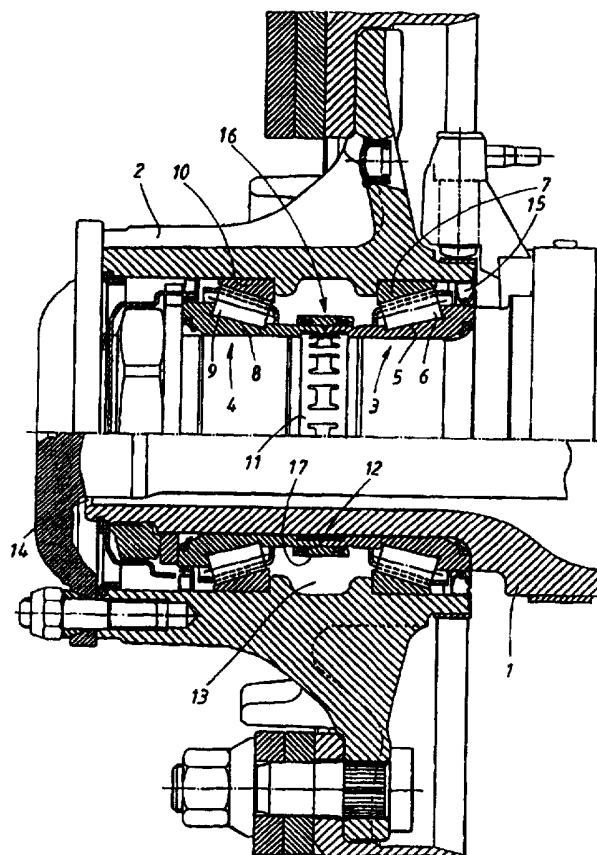
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(54) Title: SEALING DEVICE FOR BEARING ARRANGEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENT FOR SEALING OF A BEARING DEVICE

(57) Abstract

The invention relates to a sealing device (16) for bearing assemblies comprising a first bearing (3) with a first inner race (5) and a second bearing (4) with a second inner race (8), which inner races (5, 8) are arranged next to each other on a shaft (1) so that a gap (12) is formed between the inner races (5, 8), whereby oil is supplied between said shaft (1) and the surfaces of the inner races (5, 8) facing the shaft (1). The invention is characterized in that it comprises a substantially annular member (17) for mounting on the inner races (5, 8), and comprises a positioning member (18) for positioning of the sealing device (16) in an axial direction in relation to the inner races (5, 8) and also sealing elements (21, 22) for sealing against each respective inner race (5, 8). As a result of the invention, an improved sealing device in grease lubricated bearings is obtained, particularly for wheel axles of motor vehicles.



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5 TITLE:

**SEALING DEVICE FOR BEARING ARRANGEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENT FOR SEALING OF
A BEARING DEVICE**

TECHNICAL FIELD:

10 The present invention relates to a sealing device,
according to the preamble of the appended claim 1. The
invention has its main application in connection with
bearing assemblies for wheel axles of motor vehicles.

15 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION:

In connection with motor vehicles, different types of
bearings are utilized for supporting the wheels on their
respective wheel axles. Where for instance heavier
20 commercial vehicles are concerned, the rear wheels may be
carried on bearings on the rear axle of the vehicle by
means of two roller bearings mounted next to each other.
According to the prior art, these roller bearings are
typically arranged side by side so that they bear on each
25 other. The roller bearings are kept together in an
unmounted condition by means of a bearing ring, which is
substantially annular and arranged on the rear axle.

Within the internal surfaces of the inner races of the
30 bearings, i.e. on the surfaces which are constituted by the
inside of the inner races and the outside of the rear axle
itself, a thin layer of oil must be supplied for corrosion
protection of the bearings and the rear axle. This oil is
successively supplied via the interior of the rear axle and
35 is conducted in between the peripheral surface of the rear
axle and the inner side of each respective roller bearing.

Furthermore, according to the prior art, the roller
bearings themselves are lubricated by bearing grease. This
40 bearing grease is applied when assembling the roller

bearings and is retained on the bearing rollers and bearing races by means of seals.

5 A problem occurring with previously known rear axle assemblies is related to the fact that a small gap or interval is formed between the inner races of the two roller bearings. This entails the risk that the oil layer between the insides of the roller bearings and the rear axle penetrates through this gap during operation of the vehicle. This may occur as a result of the small movements which always arise in the rear axle during operation of the vehicle, resulting in that the gap between the inner races cannot be kept completely sealed.

15 The fact that oil leaks out in a radial direction through the gap between the two bearings entails certain disadvantages. On the one hand, the oil is harmful to the bearing grease of the roller bearings and, on the other hand, the oil may contain impurities in the form of small particles which may be deposited on the bearings, something which naturally is a disadvantage. A further disadvantage with a leakage is that the surface of the rear axle and the internal surfaces of the inner races risk running dry, which in turn implies a risk of contact corrosion between the bearings and the rear axle, This implies, for instance, that wheel changes are rendered considerably more difficult.

30 In the light of the above-mentioned reasons, there is a need for seals intended for sealing the gap between the inner races. However, this presents difficulties, among other things as a consequence of the fact that the area around the gap becomes inaccessible once the bearings have been pressed into position. This results in difficulties when mounting the bearings and seals for such bearings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION:

5 The object of the present invention is to provide an improved sealing device, which is primarily intended for sealing in connection with bearing assemblies on wheel axles of motor vehicles, whereby the disadvantages of previously known devices of this kind are overcome. This object is achieved by means of a device of the type mentioned in the introduction, the characterizing features of which are evident from the appended claim 1.

15 The invention is constituted by a sealing device which is intended to be utilized in connection with a bearing assembly, comprising a first bearing with a first inner race and a second bearing with a second inner race, which inner races are arranged next to each other on a shaft so that a gap is formed between the inner races. Furthermore, oil is supplied between said shaft and the surfaces of the inner races facing the shaft. According to the invention, 20 the sealing device is constituted by a substantially annular member for mounting on the inner races. The annular member comprises a positioning member for positioning of the sealing device in an axial direction in relation to the inner races, as well as sealing members for sealing against 25 each respective inner race.

Advantageous embodiments are evident from the subsequent claims.

30 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

In the following, the invention will be described in greater detail with reference to an embodiment which is shown in the attached drawings, in which:

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Fig. 1 shows a view, partially in cross-section, of a rear axle provided with a sealing device according to the invention, and

5 Fig. 2 shows, on a slightly larger scale, a cross-sectional view of a sealing device according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS:

10

In Fig. 1 a sealing device according to the present invention is shown. According to the preferred embodiment, the invention is arranged in connection with a rear axle 1 of a motor vehicle which, for instance, may be a commercial
15 vehicle. On the rear axle 1, a wheel centre 2 for at least one wheel (not shown) is arranged. The wheel centre 2 is suspended on the rear axle 1 via an inner roller bearing 3 and an outer roller bearing 4. The inner roller bearing 3 comprises a first inner race 5, a number of bearing rollers
20 6 and a first outer race 7. In a corresponding manner, the outer roller bearing 4 comprises a second inner race 8, a number of bearing rollers 9 and a second outer race 10.

25

The first inner race 5 and the second inner race 8 are arranged next to each other on the rear axle 1. Furthermore, the inner races 3, 4 are fixed in a predetermined axial position along the rear axle 1 by means of an annular bearing ring 11. During operation, the roller
30 bearings 3, 4 are consequently arranged next to each other in such a way that an interval or gap 12 is formed between those end edges of the inner races 5, 8 which are facing each other.

35

Between the roller bearings 3, 4, there is a space 13 which is filled with bearing grease intended for lubrication of the roller bearings 3, 4. Furthermore, according to what

has been disclosed by way of introduction, oil is supplied between the peripheral surface of the rear axle 1 and the internal surfaces of each respective inner race 5, 8. The oil is successively fed from a (not shown) oil tank, via the interior of the rear axle 1 and through an opening 14 at the end of the rear axle 1. The oil is utilized for corrosion protection of the rear axle 1 and the bearings 3, 4 and is, for this purpose, conducted along the outside of the rear axle 1 via a (not shown) guide track and further between the peripheral surface of the rear axle 1 and the internal surface of each respective inner race 5, 8. A seal 15 is provided in order to prevent the oil being transported away from its intended place.

According to what has been explained above, there is a risk that oil penetrates through the gap 12 and further into the space 13 intended for bearing grease. For this reason, according to the invention, a special sealing device 16 is arranged in the vicinity of this gap 12. The sealing device 16, which is shown separately in Fig. 2, is constituted by a substantially annular member 17, which is preferably made of steel or a corresponding material. The side of the ring 17 which is turned inwards, seen in a radial direction, is designed with a peripheral projecting edge 18 which is intended to abut on the two inner races 5, 8, at the gap 12, according to that which is shown in Fig. 1. For this purpose, the mutually facing edge portions of the inner races 5, 8 are slightly bevelled, which implies that the sealing device 16 may be mounted so that the edge 18 serves as a locking or positioning member. In this manner the sealing device 16 may be positioned in a correct axial position in relation to the inner races 5, 8.

Again with reference to Fig. 2, it is evident that the ring 17 is designed with two peripheral grooves 19, 20, which are accommodated on both sides of the edge 18. The

respective grooves 19, 20 each accommodate an O-ring 21, 22 of substantially conventional type, i.e. of rubber or similar material. The two O-rings 21, 22 bear tightly on each respective inner race 5, 8 (cf. Fig. 1).

5

When mounting the roller bearings 3, 4, firstly the sealing device 16 is mounted in position on the inner roller bearing 3. Thereafter, the inner races 5, 8 of the roller bearings 3, 4 are joined by means of the bearing ring 11. When mounting, it is ensured that the edge 18 in the ring 17 facing inwards will be positioned at the gap 12 between the inner races 5, 8. Since the bevelled surfaces of the inner races 5, 8 are placed next to each other, they form a deformation in the form of a groove or recess which corresponds to the shape of the edge 18 on the sealing ring 17. When the sealing device 16 has been mounted in its correct position and the roller bearings 3, 4 are in place on the axle 1, there is consequently no risk that the sealing device 16 ends up in the wrong position in relation to the roller bearings 3, 4.

20

The invention is not limited to the above-mentioned embodiments, but may be varied within the scope of the appended claims. For instance, according to one variant of the invention, the sealing device may be constituted by a cured steel ring which is designed with peripherally arranged sealing members which seal in the same manner as the above-mentioned O-rings 21, 22. In applications with high pressures, however, O-rings are preferred.

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According to one variant of the invention, the edge 18 facing inwards may be substituted by a loose annular thread or ring which is placed in a peripheral groove which is accommodated in the inside of the sealing ring 17. In this manner, a positioning function may be obtained for the sealing device 16.

35

Furthermore, the invention is not limited to be used on rear axles of motor vehicles, but may also be utilized on other types of shafts which comprise grease-lubricated bearings which are arranged in environments with contaminated oil.

Instead of the bevelled edges of the inner races 5, 8 (with which the edge 18 facing inwards interacts), the first inner race 5 may for example be designed with a deformation, e.g. a peripheral groove, with which the edge 18 may interact. In this manner, the sealing device may be correctly positioned.

Finally, it is to be noted that the invention may be utilised on different types of bearings, e.g. roller bearings.

5 CLAIMS:

1. Sealing device (16) for bearing assemblies, comprising a first bearing (3) with a first inner race (5) and a second bearing (4) with a second inner race (8),
10 which inner races (5, 8) are arranged next to each other on a shaft (1) so that a gap (12) is formed between the inner races (5, 8), whereby oil is supplied between said shaft (1) and the surfaces of the inner races (5, 8) facing the shaft (1),

15 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that said sealing device is constituted by a substantially annular member (17) for mounting on the inner races (5, 8) and comprises a positioning member (18) for positioning the sealing device (16) in an axial direction in relation to the inner races
20 (5, 8), and sealing members (21, 22) for sealing against each respective inner race (5, 8).

2. Sealing device (16) according to claim 1,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that said positioning
25 member (18) is constituted by a peripheral edge (18) facing inwards, arranged for interaction with a deformation in at least one of said inner races (5, 8).

3. Sealing device (16) according to claim 1 or 2,
30 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that said sealing element (21, 22) is constituted by at least one O-ring.

4. Sealing device (16) according to any one of the preceding claims,
35 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that said substantially annular member (17) comprises a peripheral groove (19, 20)

on each side of said positioning member, which grooves (19, 20) support said sealing member (21, 22).

5 5. Arrangement when sealing a bearing assembly
comprising a first bearing (3) with a first inner race (5)
and a second bearing (4) with a second inner race (8),
which inner races (5, 8) are arranged next to each other on
a shaft (1) so that a gap (12) is formed between the inner
races (5, 8), whereby oil is supplied between said shaft
10 (1) and the surfaces of the inner races (5, 8) facing the
shaft (1),

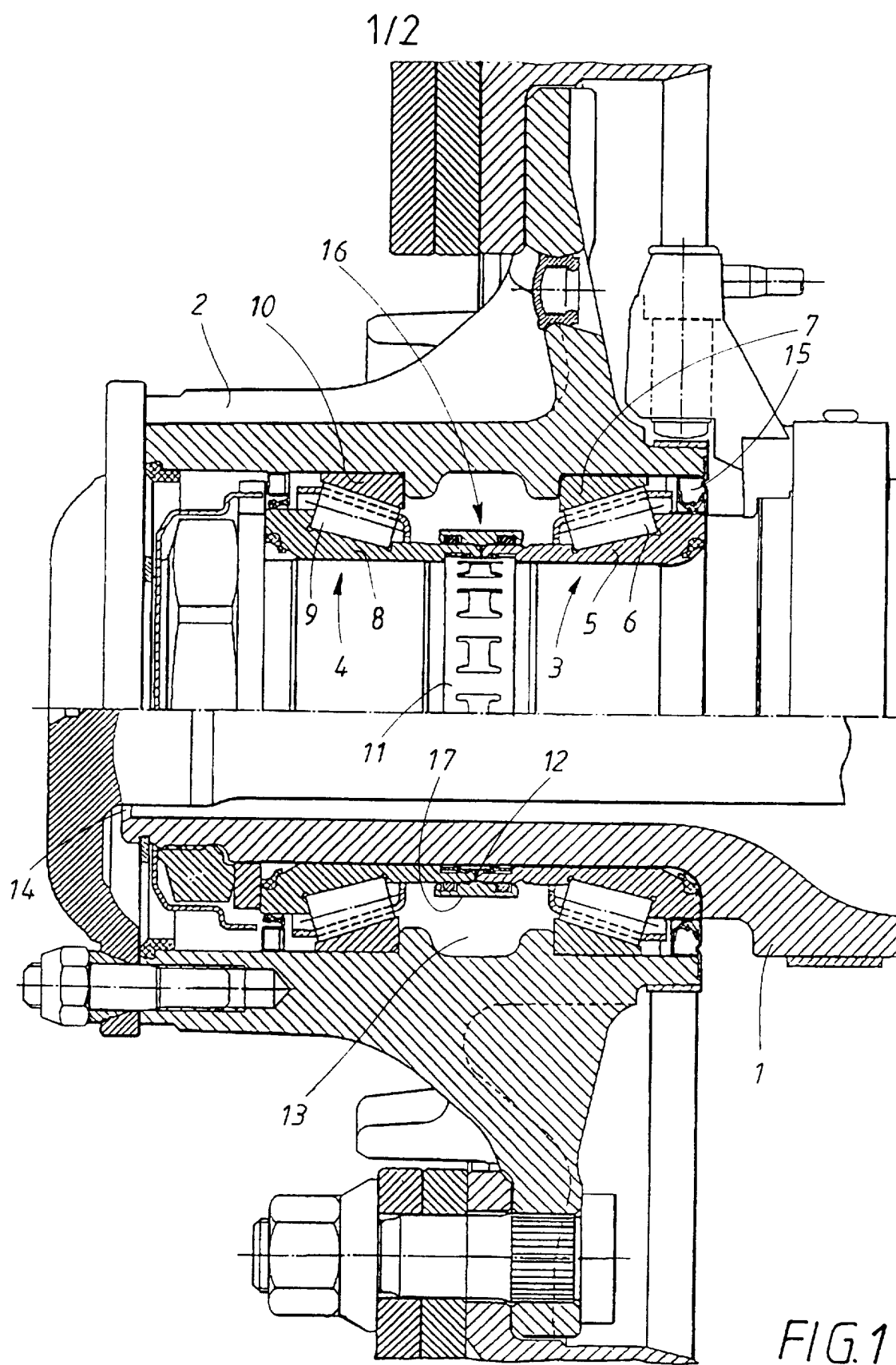
characterized in that the inner races (5, 8)
are designed so that they form a deformation for
interaction with a substantially annular sealing member
15 (16) comprising a positioning member (18) for positioning
of the sealing member (16) in an axial direction in
relation to the inner races (5, 8), whereby said sealing
member (16) comprises means (21, 22) for sealing against
each respective inner race (5, 8).

20

6. Arrangement according to claim 5,
characterized in that said deformation is
constituted by peripheral, inclined or bevelled surfaces on
said inner races (5, 8), whereby the inner races (5, 8)
25 together form a groove-shaped recess for interaction with
said positioning member (17).

7. Arrangement according to claim 5 or 6,
characterized in that the positioning member
30 (18) is constituted by a peripheral edge (18) facing
inwards on said sealing member (16).

8. Arrangement according to any one of claims 5-7,
characterized in that said means (20, 21)
35 are constituted by O-rings which are mounted on said
sealing member (16).



SUBSTITUTE SHEET

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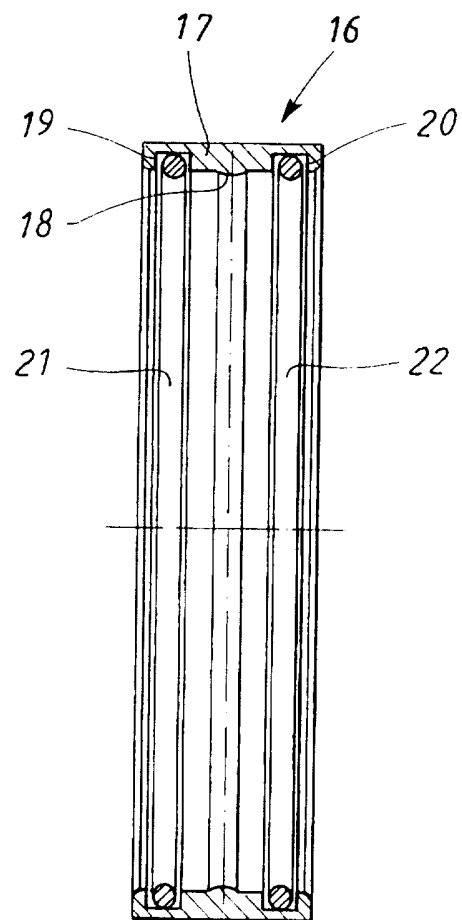


FIG. 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SE 97/00753

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC6: F16C 33/78, F16H 57/04

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC6: F16C, B60B, F16H

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5242229 A (MCLARTY), 7 Sept 1993 (07.09.93) --	1-8
A	DE 19526167 A1 (NTN CORP.), 25 January 1996 (25.01.96) --	1-8
A	DE 4226618 A1 (SKF GMBH), 17 February 1994 (17.02.94) --	1-8
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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